

Assessing Drug Abuse Within and Across Communities

**Community Epidemiology Surveillance
Networks on Drug Abuse**

Second Edition

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

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Colorado, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Funding is provided by a variety of sources, including State legislatures and State legislative initiatives, local earmarked funds, criminal justice system agencies, private organizations, and client fees. A more detailed description of this program can be found at <<http://www.nationaltasc.org>>.

Network members may find TASC data useful if there is a TASC program in their locality. However, programs may be quite complex in a given locality, operate under an organizational name other than TASC, and have ties to various service organizations. If a TASC-type program cannot be easily identified through the telephone directory, members could contact local law enforcement personnel or the county superior court to inquire whether a program exists in their community.

TASC staff work with arrestees and other criminal offenders to conduct assessments, place the arrestees into treatment, and monitor the progress of their clients. Some programs serve juveniles as well as adults. Some conduct urine toxicology screens to assess drug use among offenders. TASC also reports back to the referring criminal justice agency. TASC programs vary widely in terms of the services they provide, the characteristics of their target groups, and their niche in the criminal justice system.

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If a TASC program is operating in your community, inquire as to the type of information that can be obtained on drug use among offenders and whether the information is available for both adults and juveniles. Urinalysis data would be especially useful.

The TASC program in Arizona, called Treatment Assessment Screening Center, provides a variety of services to criminal justice agencies and courts in Arizona, including intake management, evaluation/diagnosis, psychological evaluations, counseling, psychotropic medications, and education. TASC data are regularly reported by the Phoenix CEWG representative Ilene Dode, Ph.D. (see Dode 2006). TASC toxicology laboratories processed more than 4 million urinalysis tests of individuals in the criminal justice system in 2005. Data from the testing are used to assess the drug abuse patterns and trends of the criminal justice populations by geographic area and type of drug. For example, of the 34,408 positive drug screens reported for adults (e.g., in Deferred Prosecution, pretrial, drug courts, probation and the Department of Corrections) in Maricopa County, Arizona, in 2005, 51 percent were for methamphetamine/amphetamine. As shown in exhibit 4, the Arizona TASC data can be used to make comparisons by area and type of drug (Zugor in publication).

Exhibit 4. Percentage of Positive Drug Tests for Adults in Criminal Justice Programs in Maricopa County, Pima County, and Arizona Rural Areas, by Percent: 2005

Area	Number of Positive Tests	Amphetamines/ Methamphetamine	THC (Marijuana)	Cocaine	Opiates	Other ¹
Maricopa	34,408	41	33	16	7	3
Pima	7,672	20	34	36	8	2
Rural	2,753	51	31	3	10	5

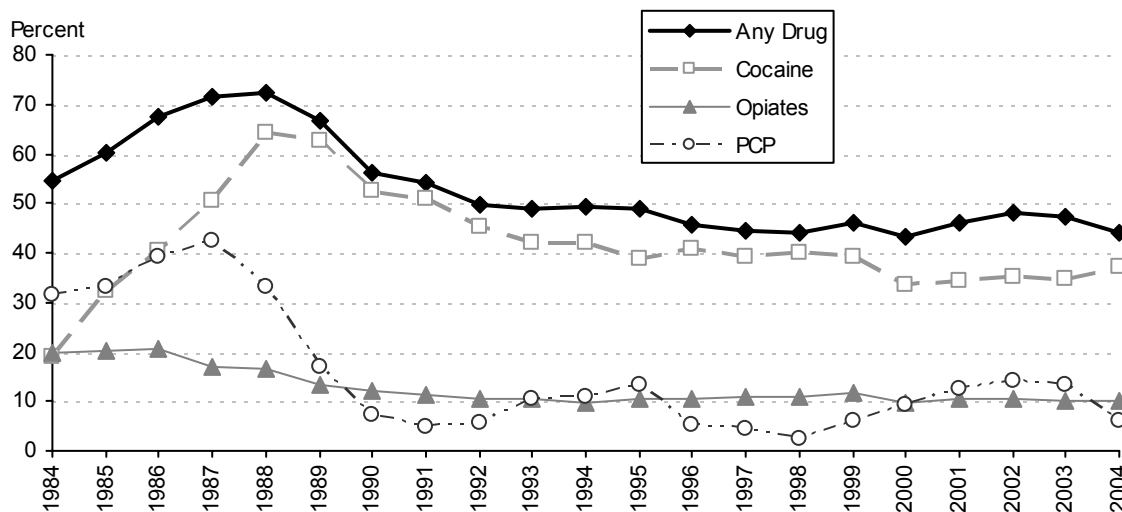
¹Includes mostly alcohol but also benzodiazepines, barbiturates, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), phencyclidine (PCP), and methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDMA).

SOURCE: Treatment Assessment Screening Center, Arizona

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Pretrial Services. Most jurisdictions have an agency that provides pretrial services to persons charged with crimes. The Washington, DC, Pretrial Services Agency (PSA) is a “premiere example of this type of agency” (Artigiani, Hsu, and Wish 2006). PSA has conducted drug testing of adult and juvenile arrestees in the District of Columbia since 1984, operating as an independent entity within the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency. More than 2,000 arrestees are tested each month. Network members can check in their area to see whether a similar service is provided. Exhibit 5 exemplifies the types of information provided by the PSA. As shown, around 45 percent of the adult arrestees in 2004 tested positive for a drug. Throughout the 21-year time period, cocaine dominated among the three drugs shown.

Exhibit 5. Percentages of Adult Arrestees in Washington, DC, Testing Positive for Any Drug, Cocaine, PCP, and Opiates: 1984–2004



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from the District of Columbia Pretrial Services Agency

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Drug Courts. As of April 2006, there were 1,557 drug courts in the United States, and an additional 394 in the planning phases. Fifty States plus the District of Columbia, North Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, and 136 tribal programs have drug courts in operation or planned. A few are some